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National Cooperative Dairy Herd Improvement Program



STANDARD DHIA

OWNER SAMPLER

WEIGH-A-DAY-A-MONTH

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE, U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Dairy-Herd-Improvement Letter

ARS-44-78
(Vol. 36, No. 6)

June 1960

REVISED STANDARD DHIA RULES

At the annual American Dairy Science Association meeting, held at the University of Utah in June, the Standard DHIA Rules were revised and clarified. The rules as approved are as follows:

1. STANDARD TESTING EQUIPMENT AND METHODS

Testing equipment and methods shall conform to the standards and methods set by the American Dairy Science Association. The accuracy of all testing and weighing equipment shall be checked as frequently as necessary to insure that equipment is operating according to manufacturer's specification.

2. COOPERATION OF OWNER

Owners must make available all registration certificates and other information for permanent identification of animals on test and of their offspring. They must provide the supervisor with freshening and dry dates, purchase and sale dates, abortion dates and death dates. When requested, they must cooperate and assist the supervisor in obtaining feed weights, roughage quality, value of product, breeding dates, and any other information needed for the calculation of complete DHIA records.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF ANIMALS

Every dairy animal in DHIA herds must be positively identified and recorded in the owner's herd book within 60 days after entering the herd by birth or purchase. A herd registry page is provided for this purpose. Cows on test must be permanently identified with either (1) registration number if registered, or (2) uniform series eartags as used in DHIA disease eradication and artificial insemination. (State code, 1-, 2-, or 3-letter prefix, 4 digits.)

Tattoo numbers or branded numbers, private eartag or neckchain numbers, or band numbers are acceptable as temporary or secondary identification until the animals enter the milking herd.

4. LACTATION RECORDS, REPORTS

DHIA lactation records shall be computed and reported (DHIA-718 or DHIA-1095) for every cow on test for each calving when the cow milks 305 days, dries off, or leaves the herd, whichever occurs first. Each lactation record shall be recorded on an individual lifetime cow record form in States where individual cow records are used.

5. MONTHLY AND YEARLY REPORTS

The supervisor shall make monthly and yearly reports as required by the State agricultural college. Yearly production records for each herd shall be reported at the close of the testing year for each herd on form DHIA-780, DHIA-205-9, or DHIA-1105 and be forwarded to the Dairy Cattle Research Branch, Animal Husbandry Research Division, U. S. Department of Agriculture. The local and State extension services may request additional monthly and yearly reports.

6. COWS TO BE TESTED

DHIA records must be kept on all dairy cows in the herd or on the farm that have ever calved, regardless of ownership, except as specified in the rule on permanent nurse cows. DHIA herds shall consist of five or more dairy cows that have freshened at least once, located on one or more farms under one management.

Members owning or operating more than one farm may divide their herd into farm units, and each may be tested as a separate unit when the units are maintained as separate herds and there is no shifting of cows between herds. In single herds involving two or more distinctly individual breeds, separate herd averages or a composite herd average may be calculated and reported as such.

The owner or his management is required to report to the supervisor all cows added to or removed from the herd since the previous test, as well as any first-calf heifers that have calved. When a cow is sold for dairy purposes, the owner must provide the supervisor with the name and address of the purchaser.

In any case involving the questionable assignment of cows to a herd to influence a herd average, the decision of the local or State Board of Directors in council with the State Extension Dairyman in Charge of Production Testing shall be considered final. In special cases involving joint operation of herds or groups of cows the local board of directors in council with the State Extension Dairyman shall decide the policy.

7. MONTHLY AND BIMONTHLY TESTING

Associations may operate on the monthly or bimonthly basis or on both.

8. NUMBER OF COWS TESTED DAILY

The number of cows tested daily shall be left to the judgment and discretion of the DHIA board of directors and State Extension Dairymen concerned. They will consider the ability of the supervisor, milking facilities, and type of records being kept.

The number of cows tested shall be limited as much as necessary to allow sufficient time for the supervisor on each visit to the farm to properly comply with all the Standard DHIA Rules, such as the identification of all animals in the herd, including eartagging when necessary; proper supervision of milking, including the identification of the cows being milked; using the proper procedures and methods of sampling, including the handling of samples and the use of a locked sample case; obtaining and using his own data; properly recording data on the barn sheet; keeping the owner's herd book up-to-date; and making all required monthly, yearly, and lactation reports. Sufficient time also shall be allowed for the supervisor to check all his work and reports for accuracy before leaving the farm.

9. DOUBLING HERDS

It is recommended that only one herd be tested in 1 day. Any deviation from this rule shall be by approval of the local board of directors in consultation with the State Extension Dairymen.

10. SUPERVISION OF MILKERS AND COWS

The herd owner shall milk his cows in such order that on the testing day cows being milked at the same time will be in close proximity and full view of the supervisor for observation.

The supervisor must be in position to observe the milkers, machines, and cows during the entire milking process.

11. IDENTIFICATION OF COWS BEING MILKED

The supervisor shall verify the identity of each cow when entered on test, by registration certificate if registered or by eartag numbers if not registered, and record the information on appropriate forms. Thereafter, at each milking the supervisor must assure himself of the correct identity of each cow as she is milked.

Supplemental Identification, such as numbers on neckbands or neckchains, numbers branded on the cows, or other permanent identification marks that have been properly cross-checked with the registration certificates and eartag numbers, may be used for positive identification at succeeding monthly test supervisions. Unless such suitable supplemental identification is provided and maintained by the owner, the registration certificates for registered cattle and eartags for grade cattle must be used at each monthly test for identification of all animals tested. Numbered, sealed neckchains or neckbands are recommended.

12. SUPERVISOR USES OWN DATA

The supervisor, or a person or central processing service authorized and approved by the State Extension Dairymen and the responsible organization, shall compute the production records for a testing period from the data obtained on the testing date.

13. CENTERING THE TESTING DAY

Production records shall be calculated by centering the testing day according to the method outlined in the DHIA Supervisor's Manual.

14. SUPERVISOR'S ROUTE

In order that the herd owner may not know the exact day the supervisor will visit a farm, the supervisor shall from time to time vary his visits to each farm as much as 3 days ahead of, or 3 days after, the centering day. (Regardless of such variation, however, all calculations shall be made on the basis of the centering day established for the herd.)

15. LOCK SAMPLE CASES

All milk samples and glassware and unrecorded barn-book pages shall be securely locked in sample case by supervisor when they are not under his immediate observation.

16. METHOD OF SAMPLING

All weighing, sampling, and recording of each milking of each cow for the 24-hour period must be done by the supervisor or person authorized by the local DHIA board of directors. Each cow's milk must be thoroughly mixed immediately before sampling.

17. LOST SAMPLES

When a sample is lost, the previous month's butterfat test shall be used. When milk weights are not obtained, the pounds of milk for the current testing day shall be estimated from the previous month's record by use of the nurse-cow table in the DHIA Supervisor's Manual. In either case, the record shall be marked "estimated".

18. APPLYING THE BUTTERFAT TEST

All equipment and methods must be approved by the American Dairy Science Association and/or State regulatory agency.

19. ABNORMAL TESTS

In cases of severe sickness or injury, it is suggested that, except for the first month of the lactation, a 40 percent change in total fat from the preceding test be considered abnormal.

Abnormal high or low records due to causes such as sickness, severe injury and off feed shall be handled similarly to lost samples.

20. RETESTS

Owner's Request

If for any reason a herd owner is not satisfied with the test on his herd, he may call for a retest. The herd owner shall pay the cost of the retest.

Surprise Tests

It is recommended that States use surprise tests in their Standard DHIA Program. The DHIR rules for surprise tests shall be followed in carrying out DHIA surprise tests.

The surprise tests may be ordered at any time by the State official in charge or at the recommendation of other supervising agencies and may be done by a different supervisor.

The cost of additional DHIA surprise tests and method of payment shall be determined by the respective State. The DHIR surprise test rules are as follows:

A. One surprise test with a preliminary dry milking is required when:

1. A herd has a rolling herd average of 500 pounds butterfat or more for 6 consecutive months.
2. A herd has a cumulative average of 300 pounds butterfat or more in the first 6 months of a testing year.
3. A herd has an average of 500 pounds butterfat or more for the year.

B. If, after the first 90 days of a lactation, the record of a cow averages 3 pounds or more of fat per day, one surprise test with preliminary milking shall be made within the next 2 months. If, after the first 90 days of lactation, the cow's record averages 3.5 pounds of fat or more per day, a second surprise test with preliminary milking shall be made before the 305th day of lactation. These surprise tests shall include the entire herd, except that in herds requiring more than 1 day's supervision only the cows meeting the surprise test requirements need be included.

Use of Surprise Test. Surprise tests with preliminary milking shall be conducted whenever possible in addition to the regular monthly test. In computing the monthly credits for a cow or herd, results of the surprise test shall be used in lieu of those of the regular monthly test. The breed registry organization shall be notified of the cows and herds on which surprise tests have been scheduled or conducted. The herd owner will pay the costs of the first surprise test made during the calendar year and the breed registry organization will pay for all other extra tests made as required above during the remainder of that calendar year.

21. FRESH COWS - DRY COWS - COWS SOLD

A cow shall not be tested until the seventh day after she calves, counting the day of calving as the first day. The record, however, is started on the fourth day after calving, counting the calving day as the first day. Cows freshening after the supervisor's regular visit and before the end of the testing period shall be given credit for their production during that period, as calculated on the basis of the results of the next test. Dry cows - the dry date is the first day the cow is not milked. The day a cow is sold and leaves the herd counts as the last day in the herd, and she gets production credit for that full day.

22. ABORTING COWS OR COWS FRESHENING WITHOUT GOING DRY

In case a cow aborts while dry, her record shall be figured the same as for a fresh cow. If she aborts while in milk and has carried a calf less than 152 days, her current record shall continue without interruption. If a breeding date is not available and the cow aborts while in milk for less than 200 days, her current record shall continue without interruption. Otherwise the current record shall end and a new lactation shall begin.

23. COWS NURSING CALVES

Temporary Nurse Cow

Cows nursing calves on the testing day are considered for the time being as dry cows. Feed records are taken as usual and recorded in the herd-record book. No milk samples are taken. Milk weights and tests obtained on the last testing day before calves are put on cows or on the first testing day after calves have been removed are used in computing production for the testing period in which calves are nursed, along with the nurse-cow table in DHIA Supervisor's Manual. The recorded number of days in milk for the lactation shall include only the number of days the cow nursed calves during the lactation period.

If records are calculated by a computing center, they shall be coded as required.

Permanent Nurse Cow

At the request of the herd owner, a cow that is to be used as a nurse cow throughout the entire lactation period may be removed from test from the date of freshening until the following date of freshening, provided she has at least one complete lactation record.

Permanent nurse cows are to be reentered on test at the following calving unless they are requalified. Cows are disqualified as permanent nurse cows if at any time they are milked by machine or by hand.

24. YEARLY HERD AVERAGES

The yearly herd average is calculated on a cow-year basis. As outlined in the footnotes on the monthly herd summary, DHIA-12, the total number of cow-days on test for the year is divided by 365 (366 in leap year) to obtain the number of cow-years. The totals for the year are divided by the number of cow-years to obtain the herd averages for the year.

25. YEARLY ASSOCIATION AVERAGE

The association average is found by dividing the total pounds of milk and total pounds of butterfat by the total cow-years.

26. COMPUTING FRACTIONS

The weights of milk at each milking and the day's total of milk are to be recorded to the nearest one-tenth of a pound, the month's milk to the nearest 10 pounds. The price per hundredweight of milk and feed may be taken to the nearest 10 cents. The value of product and cost of feed may be to the nearest whole dollar. If the fraction is less than half, drop it. If half or more, change to the next highest number.

27. FRAUDULENT PRACTICES

Any practice that is intended to create or does create any abnormal percentage of butterfat or an abnormal yield of milk is a violation of DHIA rules. Fraudulent practices shall be referred to the local DHIA board of directors for their consideration. The local board of directors shall decide what action is necessary to prevent or correct such practices.

28. RELATION OF SUPERVISORS AND OWNERS

As an employee of the local dairy-herd-improvement association, the supervisor's duty is to see that the tests are honestly made, accurately recorded, and completely reported. No payment of fees or gratuities to the supervisor is permitted from the member or others with a financial interest in the herd. The supervisor may act as a collecting agent for the association. He may collect payment for dues and fees for the association, provided a receipt is given the member and a carbon copy of the same receipt is given to the association treasurer. The supervisor shall not test his own herd nor the herd of the immediate members of his family. The supervisor is not at liberty to decide which rules are essential and which are not, but is required to observe all of them in detail. Owners or persons in their employ are equally held responsible with the supervisor for enforcement of these rules.